



**GEORGIAN  
NATIONAL PLATFORM**

**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

## Statute of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform

(Approved by the General Assembly of the Georgian National Platform on December 19, 2023)

(Transitional articles 4.7., 7.1., 10.2, 10.3, 10.5 (f), 11, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8 of the Statute were approved by the Coordination Council on December 27, 2023 as per request from the General Meeting of Members convened on December 19, 2023)

### **1. General Provisions**

- 1.1. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform is a union of local and international non-commercial legal entities registered in Georgia aiming to participate in Georgia's European integration processes, to popularize democratic values, and to advocate for the interests of citizens toward improved overall wellbeing in the country.
- 1.2. The member organizations of the Georgian National Platform (GNP) agree that EU integration is the most perspective way for Georgia's economic, social and political development and by joining the Platform they commit themselves to promote this process.
- 1.3. Georgian National Platform is a member of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

### **2. Goals of Georgian National Platform**

- 2.1. The goals of Georgian National Platform are as follows:
  - a) monitor the fulfillment of commitments undertaken under the Association Agreement and advocate for positive changes at the national as well as European level by promoting dialogue among the public, civil society and private sectors;
  - b) raise public awareness about the importance of the European integration process;
  - c) ensure effective functioning of the National Platform to achieve its set goals;
  - d) promote the implementation of the goals set by the Joint Declarations of the Eastern Partnership Summits and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement of the European Neighborhood Policy and other joint events, including:
    - implementation of measures envisaged by the priority spheres of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and other joint documents and the Action Plan;
    - harmonization of Georgian legislation with that of the European Union, including approximation of trade and investment regulation laws and

- practices with EU standards in all spheres;
  - creation of the necessary conditions for the effective implementation of the Association Agreement;
  - participation in the Civil Society Platform (hereinafter Georgian-European Platform) as determined in Article 412 of the Association Agreement and formation of the dialogue forum of the civil society as determined in Article 241 of the same Agreement;
  - in the sphere of democratization, human rights and rule of law;
  - supporting the movement of citizens and simplification of visa rules for them in a safe environment;
  - strengthening energy security and cooperation in the sphere of long-term, stable and safe energy supplies and transit;
  - sustainable development and environmental protection;
  - promotion of business development, including support for small and medium businesses;
  - promotion of social dialogue and partnership;
  - studies, technologic development and innovation;
  - education, training and youth;
  - agriculture and rural development;
  - transport;
  - cooperation in the sphere of culture;
  - regional development and cooperation on the regional level
- e) promote civil society development with regard to the Eastern Partnership, including through information, involvement and mutual cooperation.
- f) promote and support Georgia's accession to the European Union.

### **3. Forms of Activities**

3.1. To achieve the goals set by the Statute, the National Platform shall:

- a) promote raising public awareness about EU integration;
- b) set up five working groups in line with the five thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership as well as subgroups, taking into consideration the key initiatives and other directions of the Eastern Partnership in accordance with Article 9 of the Statute;
- c) discuss the implementation of the five thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership as well as special initiatives of the partnership in Georgia, including through studies and monitoring;
- d) provide society with information about the results of the studies and discussions;
- e) submit the results of the discussion in the form of recommendations/opinions to the Georgian Government, Parliament, European and Euro-Atlantic structures;
- f) cooperate with civil society organizations and public agencies of Georgia;
- g) promote the correct and efficient implementation of recommendations shared by the Georgian National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in Georgia;

- h) cooperate with the EU Delegation to Georgia and the European Commission;
- i) cooperate with the National Platforms of Civil Society Forums of other Eastern Partnership member states;
- j) cooperate with international, EU and third countries' civil society organizations participating in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum;
- k) cooperate with working groups, steering committees and other structures of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum;
- l) cooperate with the Georgian-European Platform as well as the Civil Society Dialogue Forum.
- m) promote dialogue-based cooperation with the executive and legislative authorities (both, at the central and local levels) and the judiciary.

#### **4. Georgian National Platform Membership**

- 4.1. Any local and international non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity registered in Georgia, who shares the goals and values of National Platform of Eastern Partnership, excluding those entities that have been founded by legal entities of public law, may become a member of the National Platform.
- 4.2. Besides the requirement set forth in paragraph 4.1 of this Article, an organization willing to join the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform shall:
  - a) be registered in accordance with Georgian legislation for two years or more upon submitting a written application for the National Platform membership;
  - b) have at least one year of experience working in any sphere/spheres of the five thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership;
  - c) have relevant human resources for constant participation in the Platform's activities.
- 4.3. Interested organizations that fail to meet the criteria set forth in paragraph 4.2 of this Article may be invited, upon the recommendation of the Coordination Council, as associated members, who participate in the activities of working groups as observers.
- 4.4. An interested organization shall submit an official application to the Coordination Council of the Platform, wherein it shall indicate about the person/persons, who, in case of membership, will represent the interested organization in relations with the Platform. Contact persons must not be public servants or officials of political parties. One and the same natural person shall not represent two different organizations in the Platform or its groups.
- 4.5. An interested organization must attach to the written application a registration certificate confirming its registration according to Georgian legislation and copies of the organization's statute as well as information about the number of staff members and implemented projects.
- 4.6. The Coordination Council shall decide on the issue of membership no later than two months upon receiving the application based on consultations with the working group members.
- 4.7. Before the membership issue is decided, an organization seeking membership shall submit a letter of consent about approval and sharing of the Platform goals as well

as recognition of the Code of Ethics as a mandatory set of rules to the Co-chairs of the current Council.

- 4.8. A National Platform member organization shall participate in the activities of at least one working group of the Platform in accordance with the organization's scope of activity and experience.
- 4.9. One and the same individual representing the National Platform member may simultaneously participate in maximum two working groups and two subgroups, with voting rights in one working group and consultation vote in the other. Different individuals representing the same National Platform member organization have the right to participate in the activities of both working groups with voting rights.
- 4.10. The issue of assigning an organization seeking membership to working groups shall be decided by the Coordination Council on the basis of the organization's application.
- 4.11. The Coordination Council shall notify the interested organization in writing about the final justified decision on its Platform membership.

## **5. Termination of National Platform Membership**

- 5.1. Powers of the National Platform member organization shall be terminated:
  - a) on the basis of a personal statement;
  - b) upon liquidation of the organization or cancellation of its registration in accordance with the law;
- 5.2. By decision of the National Platform, a member of the National Platform may be expelled from the National Platform, if:
  - a) it seriously violates the commitments undertaken under the Statute;
  - b) its representatives seriously violate the rules set by the Code of Ethics;
  - c) it or its representative deliberately discredits the Platform goals;
  - d) its representative is absent, without a valid excuse that has been preapproved by the Coordination Council, from planned meetings of a working group/groups.
    - 1) it is absent without a valid excuse from four consecutive meetings of working groups and/or the General Assembly;
    - 2) it abstains from responding to letters, public statements and appeals prepared on behalf of the Platform in a consecutive manner over the course of a year;
    - 3) it is absent from the meetings organized by the Platform, including sectoral meetings over the course of a year;
  - e) The head of the Platform member organization shall be notified about its representative committing the actions determined in subparagraphs "a", "b", "c" and "d" of this paragraph and be given a reasonable amount of time to withdraw the representative. If the Platform member fails to withdraw such a representative and to propose a new representative to the Platform, it will be expelled from the Platform based on sub-paragraphs "a", "b", "c" and "d" of this paragraph.
- 5.3. According to the decision of the Coordination Council, Platform membership may be suspended based on the circumstances envisaged by paragraph 5.4 of this article until the next General Assembly of the National Platform.

5.4.A decision about the expulsion of a member shall be made by a majority of votes of the members present at the Platform's meeting by secret ballot.

## **6. Rights and Responsibilities of National Platform Members**

6.1. National Platform member organizations may:

- a) participate in the election of the members of the Coordination Council of the National Platform and have its representative elected as a member of the Coordination Council of National Platform only in one group preliminary defined by the organization;
- b) attend the meetings of the Coordination Council on the basis of notifications sent at least three calendar days before the meeting. The right to attend the sessions of the Coordination Council may be restricted upon the motivated decision of the Coordination Council if the area or time allotted for the meeting does not provide a fair opportunity for the attendance;
- c) receive any information from the Coordination Council of National Platform about the activities of the National Platform, among them, about the date and agenda of the Council meeting no later than 3 days earlier and a protocol within a week after the meeting;
- d) submit a proposal on making a statement on behalf of the National Platform to the General Assembly.
- e) submit their own candidates or candidates from another member organization to participate in different work formats to the Coordination Council.

6.2. National Platform member organizations shall:

- a) participate in the work of the General Assembly of National Platform with no more than one preliminary defined representative;
- b) participate in the uniform electronic communication network of the National Platform with no more than one preliminary defined representative; representative may be replaced based on prior notice;
- c) participate in each working group of the National Platform with different representatives;
- d) adhere to the Statute of the National Platform and the decisions made by the Coordination Council;
- e) be guided by the norms set forth in the Code of Ethics in relations with the National Platform member organizations;
- f) uphold the dignity of the National Platform.

## **7. General Assembly of National Platform**

7.1. General Assembly of the National Platform is the supreme governing body of the National Platform, which is convened at least once a year by decision of a majority of the members of the Coordination Council on the list or at the request of one-fifth of the members;

7.2. The decision to put the issue of making amendments to the Statute of National Platform on the agenda of the General Assembly shall be made by

the Coordination Council, except for the case when the draft amendments and addenda are submitted upon the request of no less than one fifth of the Platform members;

- 7.3. General Assembly of the National Platform is quorate if it is attended by more than one third of members on the list. General Assembly makes decisions with a majority vote of the attendees if not otherwise envisaged by the Statute.
- 7.4. Each member organization has one representative in the General Assembly. Each member organization has one vote. The right to vote shall not be delegated to the representative of another organization.
- 7.5. General Assembly of the National Platform shall:
- a) elect the members of the Coordination Council among the representatives of the member organizations for one year by secret ballot, according to a simple majority of attendees. Each working group shall offer the General Assembly the candidates for the Coordination Council membership. All candidates nominated on the General Assembly and by a working group shall be put to a vote at the General Assembly. The two candidates who collect the most votes among other candidates nominated shall be deemed elected. In case of an equal vote, casting of lots shall be conducted;
  - b) hear the annual report on the National Platform's activities;
  - c) make a decision by the majority of attendees on the expulsion of National Platform members from the Platform;
  - d) make a decision by the majority of members on the list on the dissemination of a statement/appeal on behalf of the National Platform, including through the electronic communication network. To make a decision using the electronic communication network, it is mandatory to raise the issue for discussion at least three days (72 hours) before putting the issue to a vote;  
If the issue requires an immediate response, the Coordination Council may decide to publish a statement on behalf of the National Platform.  
The National Platform member organizations may join the statement developed by the Council and state their position within specified time frame before the dissemination of the statement. In this case, the statement will be disseminated on behalf of the National Platform and with reference to the signatory organizations.
- d<sup>1</sup>) approve the Platform Code of Ethics;
  - d<sup>2</sup>) by majority voting (if no less than more than half of the listed members are present) amend the Statute of the National Platform and other documents;
  - e) make a decision on the reorganization or self-liquidation of the Platform with a majority of 2/3 of the members.

## **8. Relationship with the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform**

According to Article 412 of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, the Georgian National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum shall promote the functioning of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform (hereinafter the "Georgian European Platform"). Members elected from the National Platform shall directly participate in the activities of the Georgian-European Platform. The activities of the Georgian-European platform shall be determined under the regulations agreed with the

European side according to which the Georgian side is represented by 18 members, including nine titular members. The rest of the members are alternatives. The members of the Georgian-European Platform elect the chairperson and the titular members who, in accordance with the Georgian-European Platform, have a formal right to participate in the voting at the meeting of this Platform. Alternate members having the consultancy vote may also participate in the meetings of the Platform.

8.1 Members of the Georgian-European Platform shall be elected according to the following procedures:

8.1.1. General Assembly of the National Platform elects 14 members of the Georgian European Platform by voting, by the majority of attendees, who represent the National Platform working groups as follows:

- the first working group - four members,
- the second working group - four members, including two entrepreneurs'/employers' association/union;
- the third working group - two members,
- the fourth working group - two members,
- the fifth working group - two members (Trade Union);

8.1.2. The working groups as well as the National Platform member organizations may nominate candidates;

8.1.3. Chairperson of the National Platform may participate in the Georgian European Platform with member status without elections;

8.1.4. The remaining three members shall be elected for the defined three directions based on a competition among the non-member non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by the commission created by the General Assembly; the commission is comprised of authoritative NGOs independent of the National Platform. The mandate of the three members elected to the Georgian-European Platform shall be equally distributed among the representatives of independent trade unions, entrepreneurs and other NGOs. The National Platform Secretariat shall provide logistical and organizational support, transparency and impartiality of the procedure.

8.2 Members of the Georgian-European National Platform will be replaced once every two years.

8.3 A joint work meeting is held with the participation of the National Platform Coordination Council and the Georgian-European Platform periodically, at least once every six months to discuss timely issues concerning the Association Agreement;

8.4 Members of the Georgian-European platform shall cooperate with the relevant groups and subgroups of the National Platform.

8.5 The five candidates for membership of the Civil Society Dialogue Forum shall be selected at the Coordination Council Meeting among the NGOs in accordance with the five directions defined in Chapter 4 of the Association Agreement;

8.6 Candidates representing civil society organizations, as well as scientific circles working on relevant directions defined by the Association Agreement, may be selected at the meeting;

8.7 The organizations that do not represent the National Platform may be selected as candidates for membership at the meeting.

## **9. Georgian National Platform Working Groups and Subgroups**

9.1. To fulfill the goals set by the Statute, the National Platform (General Assembly) shall set up five working groups in accordance with the five thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership. Working groups created by the National Platform are: 1. democracy, human rights, effective government and stability; 2. economic integration and convergence with the politics of the European Union; 3. environmental protection, climate changes and energy security; 4. contact between people; 5. social dialogue. Meanwhile thematic or field specific subgroups (hereinafter the “Subgroup”) may be created in the working groups on merit.

### **9.2. Subgroups of the Georgian National Platform**

- a) representatives of the Platform member organizations shall establish the subgroups within the working groups of the National Platform;
- b) sub-groups shall be created 1) considering the key initiatives of the Eastern Partnership and the most important challenges of the Association Agreement based on the decision of the Coordination Council of the National Platform; 2) with the initiative of at least five members of the National Platform, respective group coordinator submits to the Coordination Council the aforementioned proposal on the creation of the subgroup at the earliest meeting;
- c) based on the decision of the group, the coordinator shall present the initiative to establish the subgroup to the Coordination Council at the earliest upcoming meeting;
- d) the National Platform member organizations may participate in all subgroups with different individuals;
- e) subgroup coordinator attends the Coordination Council meeting with a consultancy vote if the Council discusses issues related to the respective working group;
- f) The group shall make a decision by a majority of attendees present at the group meeting except as provided in paragraph 9.7.

9.3. a working group shall meet at least once every two months. The working group may carry out its activities through the electronic communication network of the working group;

9.4. a working group is comprised of one representative of those organizations, whom the Coordination Council assigns to a particular working group in line with the scope of activity and experience, on the basis of the member organization’s application;

9.5. a working group may make a decision on behalf of the working group, if the information about the meeting venue, time and agenda is available for all members of the working group at least five business days before the meeting. If the group members cannot attend the group meeting, they may submit their position regarding the issues on the agenda in advance or request participation through the means of telecommunication;



- 9.6. a working group may make a decision within the scope of the preliminary distributed agenda by a majority of attendees present. The consent of more than half of the members on the list shall be obtained to make decisions using the electronic communications network.
- 9.7. a working group may disseminate statements with consent of one third of listed members;
- 9.8. activities of a working group are led by two coordinators of the working group who are members of the Coordination Council. Candidates are nominated by the groups registered two days prior to the General Assembly. In addition, the members of the platform are allowed to nominate candidates for the coordination of the working group at the general meeting, before the start of the election procedures. The Group Coordinators are elected by the General Assembly of the National Platform among the representatives of the National Platform member organizations through a secret ballot for a one-year term.

## **10. Coordination Council of Georgian National Platform**

- 10.1. The National Platform shall be coordinated by the Coordination Council comprised of 11 members. The Council members are the group coordinators led by the Chairperson of the Coordination Council.
- 10.2. The National Platform shall be coordinated by the Coordination Council comprised of 12 members. The Council members are the group coordinators led by Co-chairs of the Coordination Council.
- 10.3. Meetings of the Coordination Council shall be held at least once every two months. Special meetings of the Coordination Council shall be convened upon mutual agreement of Co-chairs or at the request of 1/3 of the Council members. In the absence of both Co-chairs, the Coordination Council shall assign one of the members of the Coordination Council to perform duties of the Chairperson of the Coordination Council by a majority of votes. The meeting of the Coordination Council is quorate if over one half of its members are present. Decisions are made by a majority of votes if not otherwise envisaged by the Statute. The Council members shall be notified of the meeting and agenda at least 3 days before the meeting and in case of a special meeting - immediately. Information about the Coordination Council meeting and agenda shall be disseminated through the common network at least one day before the meeting.
- 10.4. The Coordination Council meetings shall also be attended by the National Coordinator with the consultancy vote. The National Coordinator may recommend the Coordination Council, the working groups and the National Platform. The National Platform may request the National Coordinator to inform the Platform regarding the international events organized by him/her and/or with his/her participation.
- 10.5. The Coordination Council shall:
  - a) convene and hold the General Assembly of the Georgian National Platform; notify the members of the National Platform of the date and agenda of the meeting at least 10 days prior to the General Assembly;

- b) solve an applicant organization's membership issue by voting based on the information obtained by the coordinators as a result of preliminary discussions in the groups;
- c) publish the draft amendments and addenda to the Statute of the National Platform at least two weeks before to submit it to the General Assembly;
- d) discuss the cases of violation of the Code of Ethics and/or Statute of the National Platform and send a recommendation letter to that member, whose activities contradict the Platform goals or who seriously violates commitments undertaken under the Statute and/or the norms set by the Code of Ethics; in case of the failure to cease the violations within reasonable terms, the Coordination Council shall suspend the member's powers and submit the recommendation on expulsion of the member to the General Assembly of National Platform;
- e) based on the needs of the National Platform, the Coordination Council shall raise funds for strengthening the National Platform and fulfilling the goals set by the Statute or shall submit a relevant recommendation for receiving financing by member organizations in respect of those project proposals, which aim at strengthening the National Platform; elect the Deputy Head of the Platform among the members of the Coordination Council based on the recommendation of the Head of the Platform.
- f) appoint and dismiss the employees of the National Platform Secretariat upon the recommendation of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Coordination Council;
- g) approve the regulation on the activities of the National Platform Secretariat;
- h) elect an editorial board of the National Platform's Official Gazette, if applicable;
- i) solve other issues, which, under the Statute, go beyond the competence of the General Assembly;
- j) a member of the Platform may request the Coordination Council to put issues on the agenda.

10.6. Term of office of a member of the Coordination Council shall be terminated earlier if a) s/he no longer represents the organization in the Platform or the respective Group within which s/he was elected; s/he is absent, without a valid excuse, from three consecutive meetings (or more than half of the regular meetings) of the Council. The Coordination Council shall decide whether the member had a valid excuse.

10.7. In case of the termination of the term of office of a member of the Coordination Council, the person, who was first runner up by quantity of votes at the last General Assembly, shall become a new member of the Coordination Council. In case of a tie, the member shall be selected by sortition. A newly elected member shall perform his duties during the remaining term of office of the excluded member.

10.8. A person cannot be elected as a member of the Coordination Council for more than two consecutive terms.

## 11. Co-Chairs of the Coordination Council

- 11.1. Two Co-chairs of the Coordination Council, with equal authority, shall be elected by the General Assembly, among the National Platform members for a term of one year.
- 11.2. A person shall not be elected as a Co-chair of the Coordination Council for more than two consecutive terms.
- 11.3. Any member of the National Platform may nominate himself/herself or another candidate for the position of Co-Chair of the Coordination Council at least 10 days before the General Assembly. The candidates nominated shall confirm the nomination and submit his/her vision in writing to the National Platform no later than five days before the General Assembly.
- 11.4. Co-chairs' term of office shall start from the moment of election and last until the election of new Co-chairs.
- 11.5. Co-chairs of the Coordination Council shall represent the National Platform in relations with third parties;
- 11.6. Chairperson(s) of the Coordination Council shall:
  - a) lead the activities of the Coordination Council and chair its meetings;
  - b) sign statements/appeals and other documents of the Coordination Council and National Platform;
  - c) coordinate the inter-group activities and provide them with recommendations;
  - d) manage the National Platform Secretariat, publications and web-pages of the National Platform.
  - e) perform other functions as envisaged by the Statute.
- 11.7. In case of early termination of one of the Co-chair's powers or inability to perform his/her duties, another Co-chair shall act as the Co-chair until for the remaining term of office.
- 11.8. Only the General Assembly, by a majority of the members of on the list, may terminate powers of Co-chairs of the Coordination Council early for non-fulfillment of the duties envisaged by the Statue of the National Platform, abuse of power and improper behavior contradicting the goals of the Statue.

## **12. Regional Representations of the Georgian National Platform**

- 12.1. Regional representations of the National Platform shall be established to strengthen the National Platform;
- 12.2. The location of the representations, status of the Platform representative and the rule for recognition shall be determined by the Coordination Council by the voting majority based on consultations with the groups.

## **13. Dispute Resolution Board**

- 13.1.1. The Dispute Resolution Body (DRB) shall be established to deal with disputes, which is entitled to respond to violations of the Statute and the Code of Ethics of the Georgian National Platform.

- 13.1.2. The GNP members are elected as DRB representatives (consisting of 3 members) for a term of one year. DRB representatives shall not be members of any other electoral body of the GNP.
- 13.1.3. The Regulation of the Board shall be prepared within one month after the election of members by the elected DRB members and shall be approved by the GNP Coordination Council no later than 2 weeks after its submission.
- 13.1.4. Amendment of Regulation
- The Regulation may be amended at the initiative of both, the Coordination Council and the Dispute Resolution Board.
- The Regulation shall be amended with the consent of the majority of both bodies (6 votes needed in case of the Coordination Council; 3 votes - in case of the Dispute Resolution Board)
- 13.1.5. Obligation to Submit Reports
- The Dispute Resolution Body shall submit an annual report on activities carried out during the year to the General Assembly.

Amendments of the Statute (Articles 4.7., 7.1., 10.2, 10.3, 10.5 (f), 11, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8) shall be effective until the next General Meeting of the Georgian National Platform. The Coordination Council will additionally develop regulations on the activities of the Coordination Council.